



NEWS RELEASE

Wichita DISTRICT OFFICE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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HEARING SET FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS TO COMMENT ABOUT EXCESSIVE FEDERAL REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT

Small business owners with concerns or complaints about excessive enforcement of federal rules can voice their comments at a U.S. Small Business Administration Regulatory Fairness Board Hearing in Wichita, Kansas on April 29, 2002, from 12:30 p.m. (registration) to 4:00 p.m. at the Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce, 350 West Douglas.

SBA National Ombudsman Michael Barrera will take testimony from the hearing back to Washington, D.C. to help small businesses that are having compliance problems with federal regulatory agencies. **“We work with these agencies to encourage a less punitive and more small-business friendly regulatory environment,”** Barrera said.

Compliance and enforcement problems could include burdensome inspections, excessive fines and penalties, and acts of retaliation by federal regulators, he said.

“Small business owners want to comply with federal rules and regulations,” Barrera said. **“And federal regulators would rather assist business owners with compliance than fine them for non-compliance. By working together we help make regulatory enforcement more cooperative and collaborative.”**

SBA District Director, Elizabeth Auer is coordinating the Wichita hearing on Barrera’s behalf and welcomes the chance for small business owners to speak out. **“If anyone has been subjected to unfair or excessive regulatory enforcement by a federal agency, we want to hear your story,”** Auer said.

Barrera’s office works closely with more than 35 federal regulatory agencies to resolve complaints about excessive enforcement of federal regulations. Congress established the Office

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of the National Ombudsman in 1996 with the passage of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

The act established 10 regional fairness boards, served by 50 small business owners from across the country. Clark Stewart, President and CEO of Butler National Corp. in Olathe, is Chairman of the board in Region VII, which includes Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Iowa.

Information gathered at these hearings is included in the national ombudsman's annual report to Congress, along with findings and recommendations about the regulatory enforcement environment and its effect on small business. Each federal regulatory agency is rated in the report based upon their responsiveness to small business comments.

The national ombudsman's authority to respond to comments on compliance issues is limited to federal regulatory enforcement matters and does not include concerns about obtaining federal contracts or securing guaranteed loans.

Anyone interested in testifying at this hearing can contact Edgar Poindexter, the SBA's Assistant District Director for Business Development in Wichita at (316) 269-6613. For more information about the national ombudsman and this hearing, visit the National Ombudsman's Web site at www.sba.gov/ombudsman.

To obtain information on SBA's programs and services in the 77 counties of Central and Western Kansas call the SBA district office in Wichita at (316) 269-6616, or visit the SBA Wichita district office Web site at www.sba.gov/ks.

The SBA helps small businesses each year with access to capital and credit through its financial assistance programs, as well as providing technical training and business start-up and expansion counseling, disaster loans for businesses and home owners, and federal contracting and procurement assistance. For more information about the SBA go to www.sba.gov or call the SBA's Answer Desk at 1-800 U-ASK-SBA, or TDD 704-344-6640.

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